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Charismatic, Synchronous and Psychedelic Religious Experiences: A Personal Account

Brian Macallan

Faculty of Theology, Stirling Theological College, University of Divinity, Melbourne 3170, Australia; bmacallan@stirling.edu.au

Abstract: Religious experiences and their truth, nature, and influence remain controversial. This is despite their wide cultural expression and significant grounding in research. Personal experiences that are deemed "religious" are often critiqued for being culturally influenced and psychologically misleading, implying that this ought to discredit them. This paper seeks not to argue for the truth or falsity of these kinds of experiences, but rather to offer an autoethnographic response to how these experiences have functioned in this researcher's life. The response is contextualized broadly within the study of religious experience and contributes towards that field. Three forms of religious and spiritual experiences are offered narratively, from my early Charismatic experience, to synchronous encounters, as well as the exploration of psilocybin. It is suggested that these experiences are broadly shared, and that they can be personally as well as socially transformative. Although they are autoethnographic in nature, all three forms are situated within the context from which they emerged.

Keywords: religious experience; autoethnography; psilocybin; synchronicity; charismatic

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1. Introduction

As I sat on the rock with my friend it all seemed to fall into place. I realized I would never resolve all the theological questions I had wrestled with regarding the nature of God and the origin of the universe. I felt at peace about that, and realized that things would be ok in the end. I was 17 years old and had been attending a Christian camp at the time. I had risen early in the morning with a friend before everyone had woken up. We had decided to go hiking up the river and had found a rocky outcrop overlooking the mountains. It was here that I experienced the sense of peace and resolution just described. What no one knew at the camp, though, was that we had taken a cap of LSD[1] before our lonesome hike. Our experience in nature was both beautiful and mind altering. Following that experience, I just could not think about the questions concerning God and life in the same way anymore. In fact, the questions seemed irrelevant, or the wrong ones to be asking. My quest for understanding, however, did not stop. It has not stopped decades later. After pursuing multiple theological awards culminating in a doctorate in theology, I continue to explore and give expression to my curiosity.

My journey, before the experience I have just recounted, had started five years prior when I had become a Christian at the age of 12, which I will recount shortly. Since that time, religious experiences have shaped the whole trajectory of my life and continue to do so. This is not an uncommon story. The well-known German theologian Wolfhaart Pannenberg (1981) described a mystical experience that he had, and his subsequent life journey to make sense of that experience, in the following way

> The single most important experience occurred in early January 1945, when I was 16 years old. On a lonely two-hour walk home from my piano lesson, seeing an otherwise ordinary sunset, I was suddenly flooded by light and absorbed in a sea of light which, although it did not extinguish the humble awareness of

> my finite existence, overflowed the barriers that normally separate us from the surrounding world.

World-renowned New Testament scholar Dale Allison has recounted his own experience with two people who had died, and his encounter with them post-death. Although his account is deeply controversial for many, it is his reflection on how one subjectively perceives these experiences which is revealing. His suggestion is that these kinds of experiences were

> absolutely real and so foreign to the rest of my experience that I then took them to originate in something other than my own subjectivity. Indeed, I've had difficulty thinking otherwise even now, years later. As a result, death feels less final. (Allison 2016, p. 140)

Allison also notes the research being carried out on personal religious experiences at the Religious Experience Research Unit at the University of Wales. The unit records and investigates those who have claimed to have had religious and spiritual experiences. Allison is particularly interested in the accounts of those who have sensed the divine in their encounter with nature (p. 142). These are incredibly common experiences across different cultures and a high percentage of people have them (Sosteric 2018). Zen Master Henry Shukman (2019, p. 48), describes his own experience which appeared suddenly and unexpectedly.

> It was like an explosion of beauty, bliss, joy. But it was much more. I had seen into some kind of invisible truth hidden in the heart of all existence. As I walked back down the shore afterwards, I felt as though I weighed nothing, I drifted, I floated—the world floated, too. Palm trees, cactuses, the lapping of waves of the heavy, slow Pacific, the muscular surface of the sea, the light in the western sky, which was turning luminous orange, and the moon hanging in it like a chip of chalk—it was as if we were all in one and the same movie, or dream which no one could ever intrude on.

Shukman would only make sense of the above experience, which took place when he was an eighteen-year-old, only many years later. Eventually, he would have several of those kinds of experiences as part of a sustained Zen meditation practice. His account above parallels my own experiences while on psilocybin.[2] These encounters, and those by others that I have already noted, form part of the broad study of religious experience that scholars have been engaging with for some time. Narratively, I will seek to articulate my journey as a young person encountering LSD leading into my early Charismatic and Pentecostal experiences, and how my later spiritual experiences began to take shape outside of organized religion. In this sense, my personal account is the skeleton on which the various discussions concerning Charismatic experiences, synchronicity, and psilocybin take shape. This discussion needs to be justified against the background of religious experience in general, as well as the importance of an autoethnographic approach.

2. Religious Experience in Context

Although this paper is an autoethnographic exploration of my own religious experience, it is in no way suggesting that the concept of a religious or mystical experience is without controversy. It affirms that religious experience consists of multiple interpretations and is a dynamic and changing field of study. Taves (2009, pp. 8–10) suggests that traditional approaches that have sought to articulate religious experience as a thing unique to religions, one that is separate from the composite aspects of religious life and culture more broadly, remain insufficient. Rather, she argues that we should reconceptualize religious experiences as "experiences deemed religious". Taves (p. 15) notes that shifting the description thus allows one to situate these kinds of experiences more generally within the human quest for meaning and value. It further locates these experiences with other non-religious experiences, as well as locating religious experiences as a subset within religion.

Notwithstanding Taves' formulation of the challenge of religious experience today, or experiences deemed religious, for many people they remain deeply personal experiences, which my own story testifies to. Individuals believe that "something has happened to them, and they believe that what has happened to them is a distinctive experience, a religious experience" and that it "includes something qualitative that has been presented to them in their direct experience" (Moser and Meister 2021, p. 1). Wildman's (2011, p. 104) analysis affirms this emphasis on direct experience, framing these kinds of encounters as "intense experiences"[3], that

> involve strong and broad neural activation, corresponding to existential potency and wide awareness, involving both strength of feeling and interconnectedness of ideas, memories, and emotions in such a way as to engage a person with ultimate existential and spiritual concerns and leverage significant personal change and social effects.

Wildman's description of religious experiences certainly widens the scope of these potential encounters in a way that some traditional descriptions of religious experience have not. In fact, Wildman's account helps provide perspective on how much of organized religion, particularly Charismatic and Pentecostal forms of Christian experience, can be understood phenomenologically. Wildman could be seen to be in sympathy with Taves' approach to "experiences deemed religious". This may dovetail well with the current research on psychedelics and mental health, where questions are being raised as to the nature of those experiences, many of which are being "deemed religious" or "intense experiences". I have certainly come to deem my encounters, which will be discussed autoethnographically, as religious. Some of them can also be deemed "intense". Certainly, the majority of the occurrences I will describe and seek to frame have provided meaning, value, and have provided existential import.

3. An Autoethnographic Approach

To explore these experiences, I adopt an autoethnographic methodology that validates personal experience to describe these kinds of practices and events. As much autoethnographic research does, I too use the first-person voice (Adams et al. 2015, p. 78). At the same time, this approach refuses to accept the prohibition on storytelling as a legitimate discourse, one that has a bias against affect and emotion. For as Adams et al. (2015, p. 10) suggest,

> The stories we tell enable us to live and to live *better*; stories allow us to lead more reflective, more meaningful, and more just lives. (Adams et al. 2015, p. 10)

Mackinlay (2019, p. 193) has defended autoethnography in its rejection of analytical approaches that separate writers from their work. She also applauds approaches that affirm that vulnerability should be accepted in research. Indeed, as my own description and story will illustrate, autoethnography is a weaving of ideas, experience, and theory (Mackinlay 2019, p. 210). This is an approach consistent with Chang and Boyd (2011) who affirm autoethnography as a "qualitative, self-reflexive, and context-conscious method". Hence, in what follows I will autoethnographically explore my own experiences that are deemed religious within the framing of three key phases or perspectives. These involve my early journey as a Charismatic Christian, Jung's concept of synchronicity, as well the role of psilocybin in relation to religious experiences in my own life. I hope to show how my personal life story has shifted from more narrow conceptions of religious experience, to I hope, a more nuanced and informed account of them. My early experience with LSD took place within the context of my introduction to organized religion in the form of Charismatic and Pentecostal expressions of Christian faith.

4. Charismatic Christianity

I did not grow up in a Christian home. As I have published in other accounts[4], I became a Christian within a fundamentalist context. As a child of 12, I had found myself

at a Sunday school class in which the group was asked to "give our lives to Jesus", which I duly did. The next question was to open me up to a particular version of the Christian tradition which was to shape the trajectory, and the sensibility of my life, for decades to come. The question asked was, "Do you want to be baptized in the Holy Spirit?". My affirmative answer led me into the Charismatic movement which had been sweeping through Christianity at the time. I vividly remember being asked if I wanted the "gift of tongues". Although I believed at the time that I had received this gift, I find myself unconvinced today.[5] What did I actually experience at that time? I did experience an incredibly powerful feeling in my body: a warmth that overwhelmed it physically, which resulted in the fluttering of my eyelids. I left the room and the experience feeling both energetic and zealous. The next decade would be, with a brief hiatus involving drugs and alcohol in my teenage years, a commitment to the Charismatic and Pentecostal experience, and the pursuit of the supernatural. The idea that God could do almost anything, at any point, if I have enough faith, would consume me. Metaphysically, the position I was affirming was the traditional theistic position that emphasizes the world being separate from the divine.[6] Hence, God would need to break into my finite reality to interact with me. The idea of having powerful and intense experiences with God was central to this version of the Christian faith, where being "filled" with the Holy Spirit was a daily pursuit. Worship experiences on Sunday, to religious experiences in my bedroom at home, were common. Mostly, they were phenomenological experiences that resulted in a tingling sensation that would move over my body like waves. This often involved laughing and crying. It is easy today, having moved away from this understanding of faith and practice, to look back upon these moments negatively. The widespread power and abuse within much of the Charismatic and Pentecostal movement, as well as the examples of fraud, are well known; my personal account earlier is one amongst many. I had also bought into the cultural isolation and conservative morality that seemed to walk hand in hand with these versions of the faith.[7] It was during my teenage years that my then-girlfriend's brother died from cancer. This would bring to the surface numerous questions concerning my faith and the way I understood the God–world relationship. My journey with cancer decades later would cause a similar realignment of my faith.

The reality though, is that as someone who had embraced a drug lifestyle in my teens, a return to Charismatic forms of practice and faith probably saved my life. These intense experiences[8] that I pursued, and at times encountered, created a psychological outlook that was buoyant and hopeful. I wanted to have those experiences rather than the ones offered by drugs and alcohol. Along with many friends around me who were burnt by the Charismatic movement, and those who were disappointed with their "non-experiences", there were also many whose lives were profoundly changed. Like myself, there were others who were desperate too. An intense experience in the Charismatic movement enabled many of them to come clean from substance abuse, while also restoring family and personal relationships. How does one make sense of this mixed Charismatic reception? Essentially, that was my autoethnographic question. As I moved away from the Charismatic movement, I chose to see those experiences, with their bodily expressions, as just neurological responses that were culturally or psychologically generated. I rejected the idea that potentially they might be conscious experiences of the divine. There was a temptation to dismiss the religious experiences as they had previously been coupled with the negative theological and political positions I had moved away from. Later experiences with synchronicity and psychedelics would help provide a perhaps wiser interpretation of those experiences, rather than a simple rejection.

5. Synchronicity

One of the dimensions that characterized the expression of my Christian faith was the belief that an individual might receive "words of knowledge" about others. This came under the category of prophecy.[9] I would often be praying for someone and have an image, or specific idea, which I would then share with them. Many of these, but certainly not all,

seemed to be accurate to those who heard them. Yet even after rejecting the very possibility of these experiences, following my Charismatic withdrawal, they continued to happen. It has probably been one of the most defining features of my personal experience over the last decade. Many times, I will be thinking of something, and the person with me will then mention that exact thing. These kinds of experiences might include those just mentioned which involve being aware of what others are thinking, but oftentimes are as simple as listening to a specific song, stopping on the side of a road, and the road sign having that same song name. I can appreciate how this might seem trivial to many, and can perhaps be explained by forms of pattern recognition. It has happened so many times though, in my own life, that even though there could be other explanations for these experiences, they have been so numerous and prominent that I find them, like Allison earlier, hard to reject.

What does this mean for me? Over the time when these experiences take place, I tend to believe there is something deeper going on in the universe than I can rationally comprehend. I have found Jung's understanding of synchronicity, at a minimum, the best way to understand what might be taking place. Jung (1973, p. 19) has suggested that there are certain experiences that traditional cause-and-effect descriptions simply cannot take into account. It is, rather, a "falling together in time", a simultaneity to which Jung designates the term "synchronicity". Jung (p. 21) notes that he had been investigating these kinds of phenomena for quite some time and that

> What I found were "coincidences" which were connected so meaningfully that their "chance" concurrence would represent a degree of improbability that would have to be expressed by an astronomical figure.

For Jung, synchronicity is when two simultaneous events can be meaningfully paralleled (p. 25). These events are acausal (p. 30), and

> However incomprehensible it may appear, we are finally compelled to assume that there is in the unconscious something like an a priori knowledge or an "immediacy" of events which lacks any causal basis. At any rate our conception of causality is incapable of explaining the facts. (p. 31)

Metaphysically, as I have tried to analyze my experiences of this ilk along with my Charismatic ones, I concluded that perhaps the divine[10] is not as separate from the world as my Christian experience had suggested. My previous belief was of a God that needed to come from the outside and break into the present.[11] In time, though, I have developed a Panentheistic perspective where God and the world are interconnected: God in the world, and the world in God. Hence, my experiences began to make more sense from a Panentheistic viewpoint. Conceptually, I find it helpful to think about the encounters I have had as a "becoming aware of" or an "encountering" of different levels of consciousness. Although I do not claim to have a sophisticated understanding of synchronicity and how it works, it was these experiences that caused me to re-evaluate my previous Charismatic and Pentecostal experiences more positively. It allowed an older version of myself to be able to decouple the experiences from the theological wrapping that they came in. Perhaps the same might become the case as I look back on my experiences of synchronicity?

Nonetheless, the question of different levels of consciousness that we could potentially have access to is one of the interesting questions raised by recent studies on psychedelics. My own historical experience with psilocybin and LSD at points in my life has made some of these questions personal.[12] Hence, in light of my Charismatic experiences and my encounters with synchronicity, I have attempted to see if it is possible to integrate these diverse events.

6. Psilocybin, Psychedelics, and Religious Experiences

It is becoming well known today that there has been a resurgence in the studies of psychedelics and other previously banned substances such as MDMA (often known as ecstasy). There is now a growing body of research exploring their potential benefit for a myriad of mental health conditions (Al-Naggar et al. 2021). In a popular context, it

is Michael Pollan's (2018) book *How to change your mind* that has been influential in the general public becoming aware of these studies. The current growing area of research into psychedelics and mental health is showing benefits for major depressive disorder (Davis et al. 2021), anxiety (Griffiths et al. 2016; Ross et al. 2016), alcohol dependence (Bogenschutz et al. 2015), and pilot studies for eating disorders. One of the interesting aspects of the research is that many are suggesting that it was the most powerful experience in their lives up until that point. Others are describing it as a religious or mystical encounter (Griffiths et al. 2011). William Richards's (2015) has perhaps given the most definitive exposition of psychedelics and religious experience to date, showing both its widespread nature and benefits.

The experience creates a sense of oneness with others and the universe, and of interrelatedness. Even those who don't experience these things claim to be getting a better perspective on their life, past, jobs, and close relationships (Richards 2015, p. 290).

In a very short time, it is my suspicion that treatment with psilocybin will be one of the major therapies in the mental health sector. It is of course not just the psilocybin, but the *assisted experience* which is transformative. This raises questions about how traditional societies have sought to create experiences for transformation in their communities, and what we can learn from them. Many of these societies used psychedelics as part of that guided experience.

It is easy to dismiss the religious or mystical aspects of these experiences as simply an encounter that is generating a bodily and psychological effect in individuals. CT scans on individuals undergoing psilocybin treatment show that there is a radical change taking place in the neural networks in the brain. It seems to be able to break down the Default Mode Network that often keeps our thinking in a rut (Carhart-Harris et al. 2016).

Reductionists might want to suggest that all forms of religious experience are simply the body's biological and chemical makeup producing the occurrence. Hence, there is no real encounter with something beyond our body and our personal conscious reality. The same might have been said about my early Charismatic encounters. I suspect it could be more difficult to suggest synchronous experiences are simply the body reacting to chemicals. At best, one could argue that the brain's in-built capacity to make connections and build cohesive narratives is at work here.

Alternatively, my hunch is that those on psilocybin are tapping into a different level of consciousness that might allow them to access an equally true and valuable dimension of existence. There are well-known stories of those who have these kinds of "consciousness-changing experiences" without the aid of psilocybin and psychedelics. This can happen in meditation such as in Henry Shukman's account earlier, or even those, also like Shukman, who have random experiences of oneness and interrelatedness with reality.[13] Even those who come from atheist backgrounds can have random mystical experiences. These experiences are often deeply disturbing for these individuals as therapists are not equipped to deal with this, often diagnosing these patients as mentally disturbed based on the DSM criteria (Van der Tempel and Moodley 2020).

What my own historical experience with Psilocybin suggests is that the most plausible explanation, to me, is that it does allow one access to a greater encounter with a state of consciousness that is outside of one's own (Richards 2016, p. 138). Of course, this cannot be proven, but phenomenologically the research seems to indicate that this is what is experienced by many who are on psilocybin. Experiences in nature, and with others while on psilocybin, have allowed me to feel deeply connected and related to the world around me. Interestingly, many atheist philosophers such as David Chalmers (2010, p. 121) and Thomas Nagel (2012), suggest that consciousness might be a foundational aspect of the universe. Human beings have evolved to survive and act in a specific way over millennia. Hence, our conscious perception and rationality are evolved mechanisms. It is perhaps unfair to suggest that this must be the only way a conscious being must think or engage with the world around them. As Nagel argues, we do not and perhaps will never know what it is like to be a bat.

I do believe that much of our religious experience is biological and chemical. How could it not be? We are bodies. Where else will our experiences take place? These experiences do shape and alter our makeup. Psychology today touts the bio–psycho–social model as almost gospel. The point they make is that all of these things interact and change who we are. It is no different with religious experiences.

My own historical experiences with psilocybin were different from my Charismatic ones, as they did not have similar bodily manifestations. I did not seem to have many synchronous encounters on psilocybin either. I did, however, experience a sense of interrelatedness and connection to those around me and developed a deeper personal insight into my role in the world. Phenomenologically, the world felt alive and different too. It was as if the scales had fallen off from my evolved reductionistic eyes.

My personal account started by discussing an early encounter with LSD amidst my initiation into the Charismatic and Pentecostal expressions of organized religion. My hope is that perhaps I am wiser now than I was in my earlier days, and that my experiences with synchronicity (even if only embryonic) and with psilocybin have enabled a more holistic and more nuanced perspective on religious experiences more generally. It certainly has enabled me to move beyond an outright rejection of these kinds of experiences that I embraced following my difficult experiences in the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements. In the following conclusion I seek to offer my current understanding of religious and spiritual experiences that have been formed from my journey to date. The metaphysical speculations are exactly that: speculations. But hopefully they are speculations in a good Whiteheadian fashion and have at least sought to take flight on the basis of my own (if limited) experience.

7. Conclusions

I have never felt comfortable returning to and pursuing the kinds of experiences of my Charismatic past. Perhaps this has more to do with the institutional abuse and power that went with it, which I have discussed. I feel like I have little ability to generate synchronous moments either, yet they seem to occur regularly. In time, an interesting reciprocal relationship between practice and experience has emerged. Synchronous experiences, and those with psilocybin, have led me to be more open to re-engaging with my faith, prayer, meditation, and other communal rituals. More consistent engagement with those practices seems to have led to more regular mystical and synchronous experiences without the use of psilocybin.

I am also deeply cautious of allowing my experiences to form my beliefs around the God–world relationship, although this is almost impossible to avoid. These encounters can shape us positively, but there is the danger that they can strengthen negative biases, and perhaps even create them. However, no one needs an intense experience to do bad things! The experience of the mystic though, could have many positive benefits; for as the French philosopher Henri Bergson (1975, p. 75) has suggested,

> The remembrance of what they have been, of what they have done, is enshrined in the memory of humanity. Each one of us can revive it, especially if he brings it in touch with the image, which abides ever living within him, of a particular person who shared in that mystic state and radiated around him some of its light.

My personal religious and mystical experiences, from my early Charismatic ones through to synchronous encounters and those with psilocybin, have been one of three pillars that have led me to an affirmation of the divine for myself; an affirmation that there is a consciousness and energy that is personal, or at least no less than personal.[14] The Christian tradition is the faith that I have found myself in and continue to be resourced by. As is well known, there is much within the Christian tradition that is not nourishing, and rather destructive. This is perhaps the same for any tradition, whether spiritual or not.

Metaphysically, my own religious occurrences, combined with my theological reflections, suggest to me that consciousness extends beyond my body, and that there are other forms of consciousness in the world unlike my own. My experiences lead me to believe that we are all connected in ways we do not yet fully understand. They also encourage within

me a commitment to bring about change in the world, a change that affirms our oneness with each other, our fellow creatures, and God. I hope that my own autoethnographic account of these experiences will contribute to the growing literature on the topic. I also hope that it affirms that these experiences certainly happen and are real, even if not fully understood. We should resist the equal but opposite temptation to reject these experiences out of hand, and also the temptation to accept them at face value, systematize them, and reject research that challenges them. For as the apostle Paul has suggested, and it is true when we speak of religious experiences, we all see darkly in a glass. However, we still see.

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Notes

[1] At points throughout this work I will be discussing research into psychedelics, while also noting at times my own personal encounter with these substances historically. It is worth noting that psychedlics involves a range of different substances, which although similar, are quite different in other respects. William Richards (2016, p. 68) notes the four major forms of psychedlic substances as "psilocybin, LSD (d-lysergic acid diethylamide), DPT (dipropyltryptamine), MDA (methylenedioxyamphetamine), and DMT (dimethyltryptamine)". Hence, the experience I describe here was with LSD, while later experiences involved Psilocybin.

[2] Although it is not my intention to describe the history of the use of psychedelics in relation to religious experiences, it is worth noting that there is something about the Eastern religions and practices that was a natural connection for many within the countercultural movement in the Western context in the 1960s. Kripal (2012, p. 447) describes this in the following manner, "These were deeply revelatory experiences that cried out for an explanation and a cultural frame generous enough to hold them. That explanation and that frame were commonly provided by Asian myth, symbol and practice. That is why so many young Westerners traveled to Asia in the 1960s and 70s. That is why they loved India, Tibet, Nepal and Japan".

[3] For Wildman, intense experiences might include phenomenological aspects, or changes in perception, but not necessarily.

[4] In this publication, I describe the nature of my experience as one where the infalliblity of scripture was seen as critical. My particular expression of fundamentalist Christianity was one in which I affirmed the infallibility of scripture and conservative political views, while also embracing complementarian approaches to gender. As I discuss in my publication, it was through an encounter with Feminist theology and Process Theology that I was able to move beyond these early perspectives that ran parrallel with the religious experiences that I now recount (Macallan 2021). I recount how my change in theological outlook led to the loss of my job as well as the significant finanial challenges that followed.

[5] Cartledge.

[6] Panenetheism is the view that articulates that the world is in God and God in the world. Pantheism collapses God and the world into one. Traditional theistic approaches have tended to emphasize that the world is outside of God.

[7] In my article describing how my experience of cancer shifted my theological outlook, I note my own journey from holding conservative theological views more generally, and how cancer shifted the way I think about evil and suffering (Macallan 2018, 2020). The persepective of an interventionist God, and rethinking what that means, was part of that process. More broadly, I now consider the conservative political views I then held as dangerous regarding how power functions in society to oppress (Macallan 2019) as well as how my conservative theological outlooks impact the enviroment (Macallan 2021).

[8] I am using Wildman's terms here.

[9] The role of prophecy is often radically misunderstood. It is less about "words of knowledge" than about nurturing an alternative consciousness to the dominant culture (Brueggemann 1978, p. 13)

[10] Process theology has been crucial in helping me frame these sorts of questions. Process theology articulates the God–world relationship Panenetheistically, whereby both are subject to the durational flow of reality.

[11] Clayton's (2000, p. 477) engagement with Hegel has proved helpful for me in showing that, by definition, the finite must find itself within the infinite for the infinite to be coherent.

[12] I have already noted that we need to distinguish between LSD and Psilocybin. I also need to note that by recounting experiences that I have had in the past with Psilocybin I am in no way suggesting or encouraging its use. Despite it being given breakthrough status by the FDA (Federal Drug Adminstration) for treatement of Major Depressive Disorder in the United States, it is still a schedule 1 drug and illegal according to the DEA (Drug Enforcment Agency). In my own context in Australia, despite initial

success in research studies, it is also illegal. Hence, I do not take Psilocybin at present and encourage others to wait until further changes in legislation take place.

[13] There has been debate within Buddhist circles regarding the value of psychedelics for achieving different states of consciousness. For a good overview of these concerns see (Stolaroff 1999). He suggests potential value but notes the importance of correct methodology with regard to the use of psilocybin which involves the important questions of dose and setting. These are emphasized strongly in the current research literature regarding the use of psilocybin in clinical settings.

[14] This is the term used by Clayton and Knapp (2012) when describing, at a minimum, what we might infer from the scientific evidence concerning a divine being.

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